

Message Text

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE VIENNA 7586

DEPT PASS USDA/FAS FOR SINDELAR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, AU

SUBJECT: U.S. CANNED FRUITS CONTAINING STARCH SYRUP

REF: VIENNA 7136

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. WE HAVE FOLLOWED UP EARLIER CONTACTS WITH AUSTRIAN IMPORTERS OF U.S. CANNED FRUITS TO DETERMINE REACTION TO AUSTRIAN NOTE VERBALE ON USE OF STARCH SYRUP. CONSENSUS IS IMPORTING SUCH FRUIT SHOULD NO LONGER POSE PROBLEM SINCE U.S. PACKERS PREPARED USE FULLY HYDROLIZED PURE GLUCOSE SYRUP IN PREPARING PACKS FOR AUSTRIA. HENCE, U.S. CANNED FRUITS WILL NOT RUN AFOUL AUSTRIAN ANTI-DEXTRINE RULING. DETAILED COMMENTS BY INDIVIDUAL IMPORTERS FOLLOW.

2. A VIENNA-BASED IMPORTER AND OPERATOR OF NATION-WIDE FOOD CHAIN, NOTED SOME REDUCTION IN PURCHASES U.S. CANNED FRUITS RESULTING FROM DELAY IN DECISION-MAKING BY AUSTRIAN AUTHORITIES. WHILE SYRUP ISSUE WAS PENDING COMPANY PURCHASED PRODUCT FROM OTHER THAN U.S. SOURCES. ALSO, LABELS HAD TO BE REVISED TO INDICATE USE OF PURE GLUCOSE. RESULTANT TOTAL DELAY IN U.S.

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CANNED FRUIT SHIPMENTS ABOUT 2 MONTHS.

3. ANOTHER LEADING FOOD IMPORTER IN UPPER AUSTRIA HAS BEEN BUYING U.S. CANNED PEACHES IN SOMEWHAT SMALLER VOLUME THAN YEAR AGO BECAUSE SOUTH AFRICAN PRODUCT NOW HAS CONSIDERABLE COMPETITIVE EDGE OVER U.S., DUE IN PART TO PRICE INCREASES IN THE U.S.

4. ANOTHER VIENNA-BASED FOOD IMPORTER AND WHOLESALER HAS BEEN PURCHASING CALIFORNIAN FRUIT COCKTAIL AT REDUCED LEVEL, NOT BECAUSE OF SYRUP PROBLEM WHICH THEY CONSIDER HAS BEEN CLEARED UP, BUT BECAUSE SOUTH AFRICAN COMPETITION. FIRM STATES SOUTH AFRICA NOW OFFERING PRODUCT OF QUALITY ALMOST COMPARABLE TO U.S. STANDARDS AT APPRECIABLY LOWER PRICES, AND THAT INCREASE IN DOLLAR VALUE RELATIVE TO LOCAL CURRENCY HURTING SALES U.S. CANNED FRUITS TO AUSTRIA. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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5. COMMENTS. WE BELIEVE COMPANIES INTERVIEWED REPRESENT CROSS SECTION AUSTRIAN IMPORTERS-DISTRIBUTORS U.S. CANNED FRUITS. THEIR COMMENTS APPEAR OPTIMISTIC AND ENCOURAGING AS FAR AS AUSTRIAN FOOD LEGISLATION ON ADDITIVES IS CONCERNED. AUSTRIAN TRADE GREATLY APPRECIATIVE OUR EFFORTS TO HAVE UNCERTAINTY CLEARED UP. TO THIS END THEY FEEL ANY REDUCED IMPORTS U.S. CANNED FRUITS INTO AUSTRIA WILL BE DUE MAINLY TO (1) HIGHER U.S. COST FOR PRODUCTS IN PART BECAUSE RECENT STRENGTH U.S. DOLLAR, AND (2) INCREASED COMPETITION FROM SOUTH AFRICA. EMBASSY WOULD LIKE COMMENTS FROM U.S. SIDE AS WELL TO LEARN WHETHER OPTIMISM EXPRESSED BY AUSTRIANS ON GLUCOSE JUSTIFIED. WE NEED RESPOND TO AUSTRIAN NOTE VERBALE OF AUG. 1.MEEHAN

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